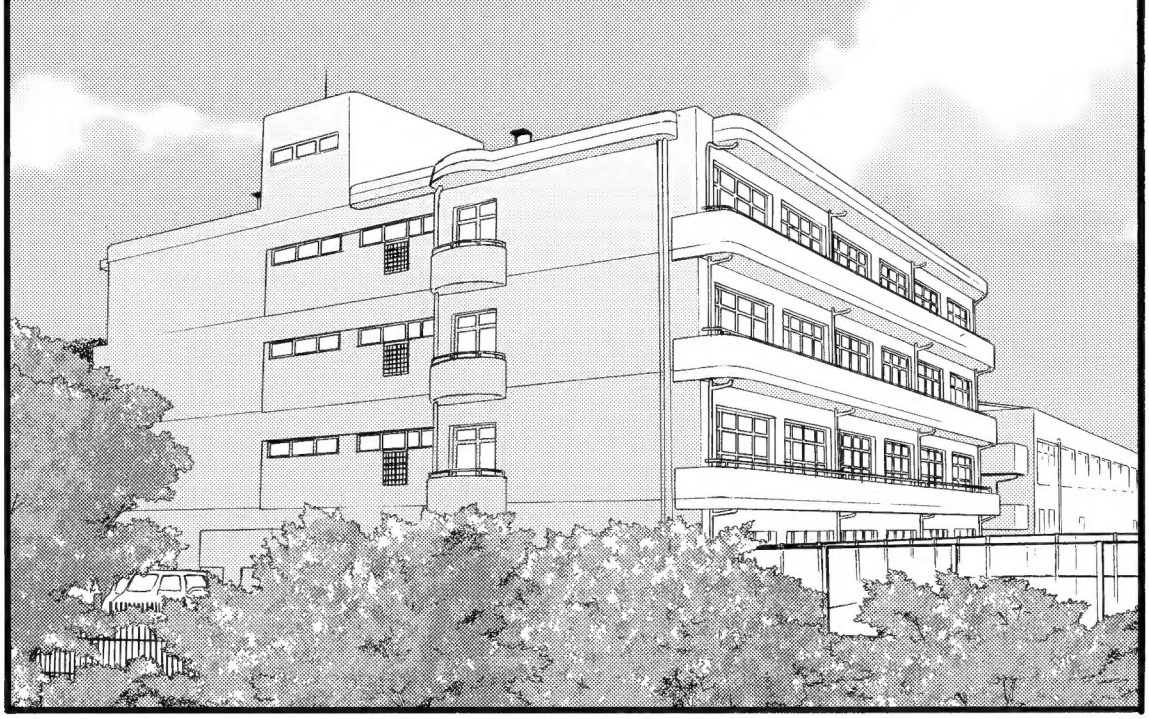
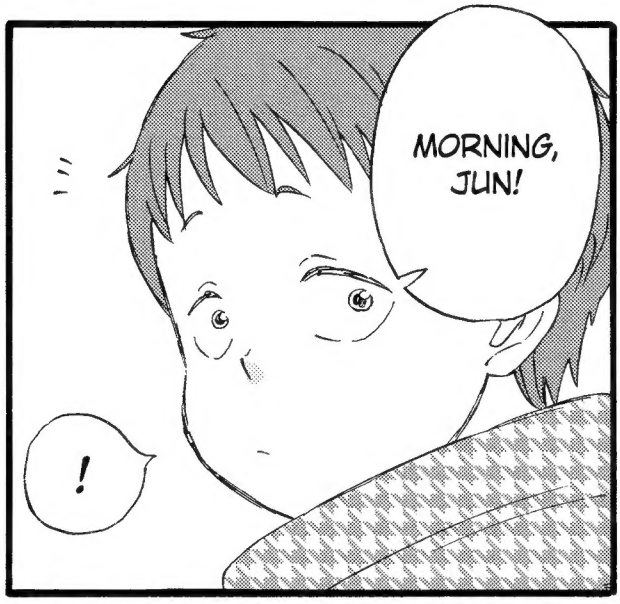
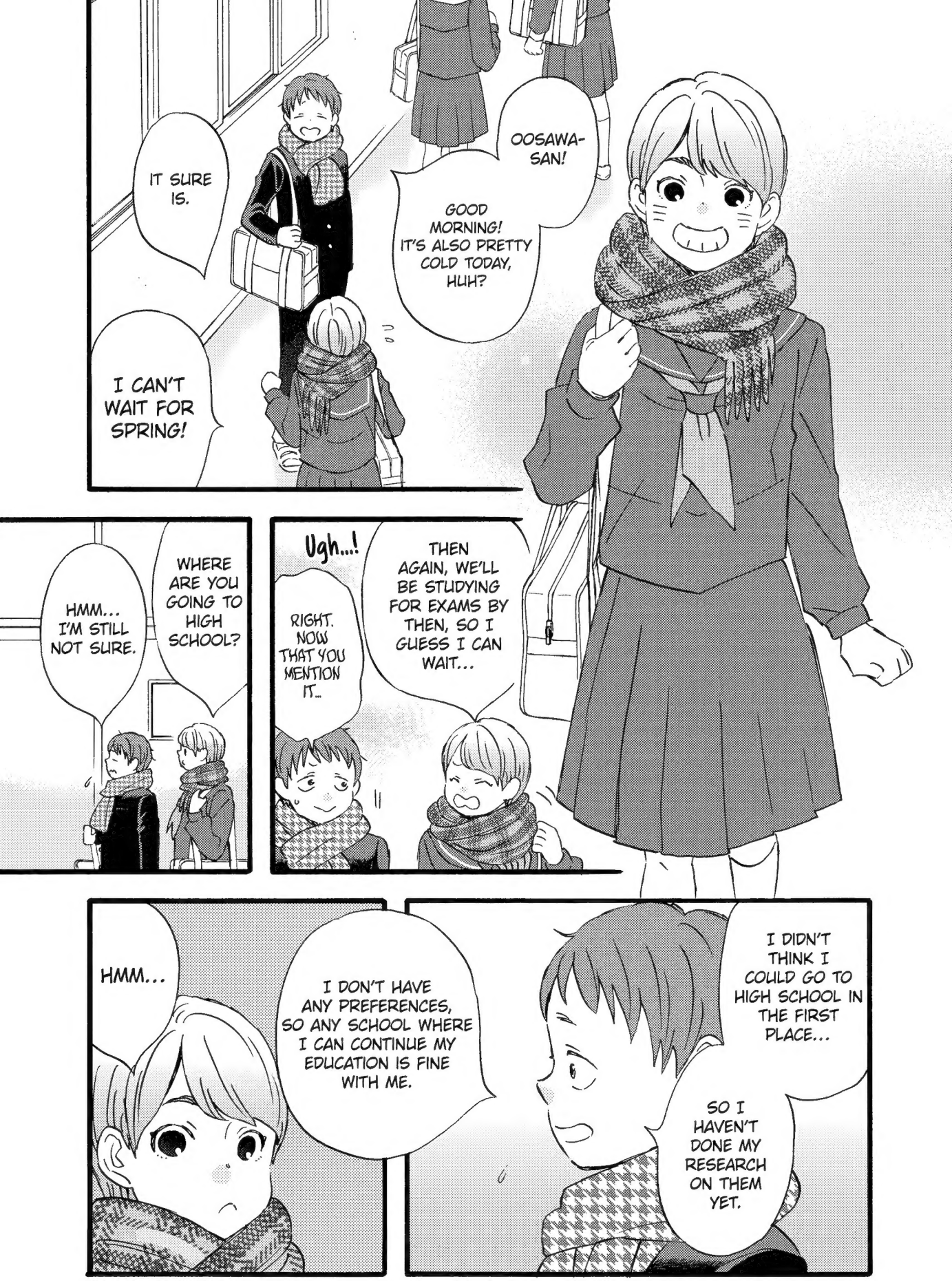


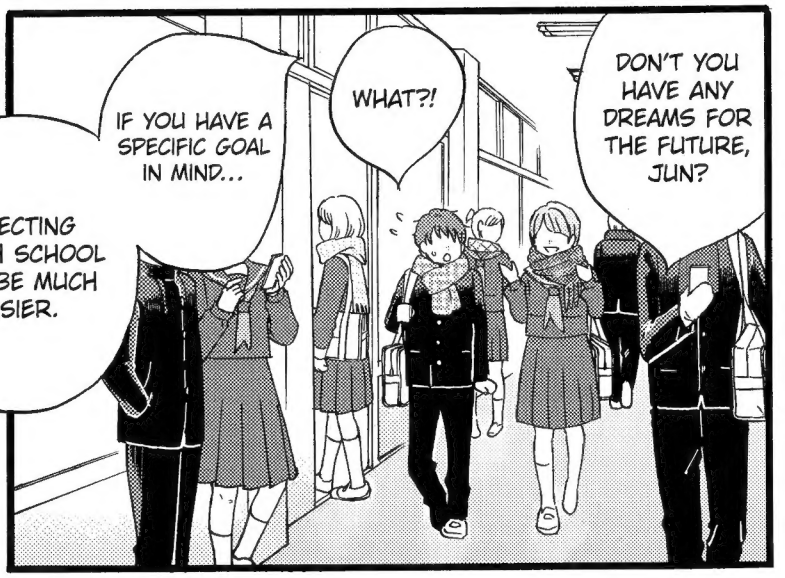
GOOD MORNING!
MORNING!
HEY, ABOUT THE VIDEO I SENT YOU YESTERDAY...
IT'S COLD AS HELL TODAY!
Chatter
Chatter
Chatter
Chatter

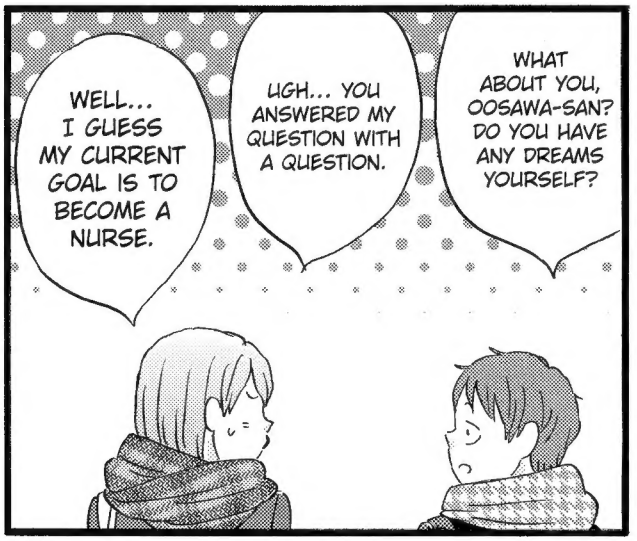

MORNING, JUN!
!

OH!


OOSAWA-SAN!
GOOD MORNING! IT'S ALSO PRETTY COLD TODAY, HUH?
IT SURE IS.
I CAN'T WAIT FOR SPRING!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO HIGH SCHOOL?
HMM... I'M STILL NOT SURE.
Ugh...!
THEN AGAIN, WE'LL BE STUDYING FOR EXAMS BY THEN, SO I GUESS I CAN WAIT...
RIGHT. NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
I DIDN'T THINK I COULD GO TO HIGH SCHOOL IN THE FIRST PLACE...
SO I HAVEN'T DONE MY RESEARCH ON THEM YET.
HMM...
I DON'T HAVE ANY PREFERENCES, SO ANY SCHOOL WHERE I CAN CONTINUE MY EDUCATION IS FINE WITH ME.

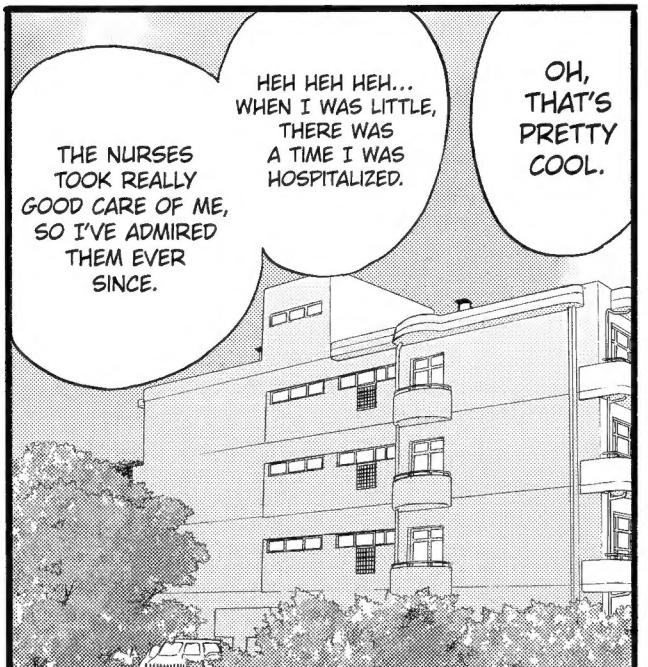
A GOAL, HUH?

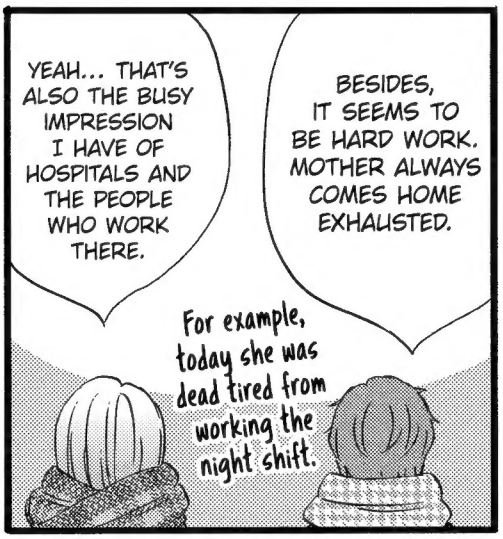

SELECTING A HIGH SCHOOL WILL BE MUCH EASIER.
IF YOU HAVE A SPECIFIC GOAL IN MIND...
WHAT?!
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE, JUN?

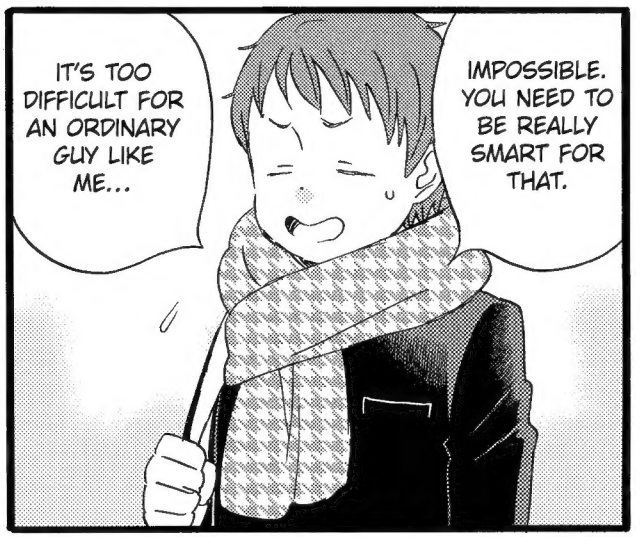

WELL... I GUESS MY CURRENT GOAL IS TO BECOME A NURSE.
UGH... YOU ANSWERED MY QUESTION WITH A QUESTION.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, OOSAWA-SAN? DO YOU HAVE ANY DREAMS YOURSELF?

HMM...
I OWE FATHER AND MOTHER A LOT. WHAT COULD I DO THAT WOULD LET ME REPAY THAT DEBT...?

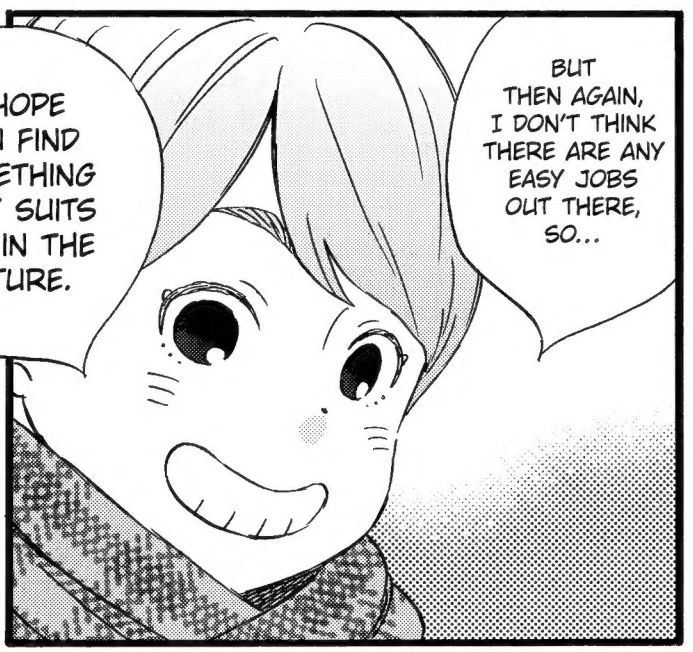
WHY DON'T YOU ALSO BECOME ONE?
YOUR MOTHER IS A DOCTOR, RIGHT?
WHAAAT...?
Bwa ha!

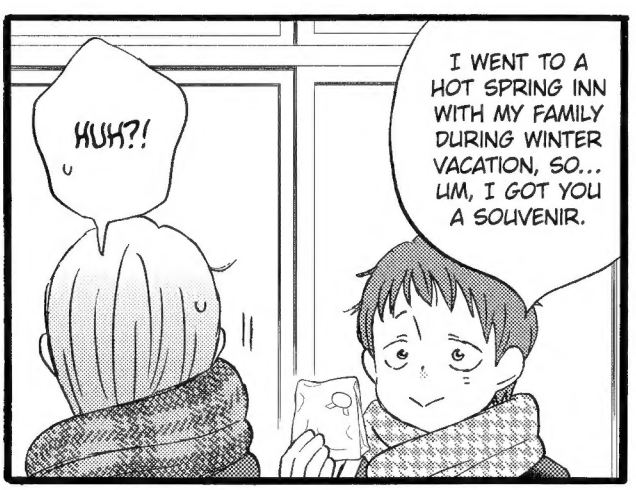

THE NURSES TOOK REALLY GOOD CARE OF ME, SO I'VE ADMIRED THEM EVER SINCE.
HEH HEH HEH... WHEN I WAS LITTLE, THERE WAS A TIME I WAS HOSPITALIZED.
OH, THAT'S PRETTY COOL.

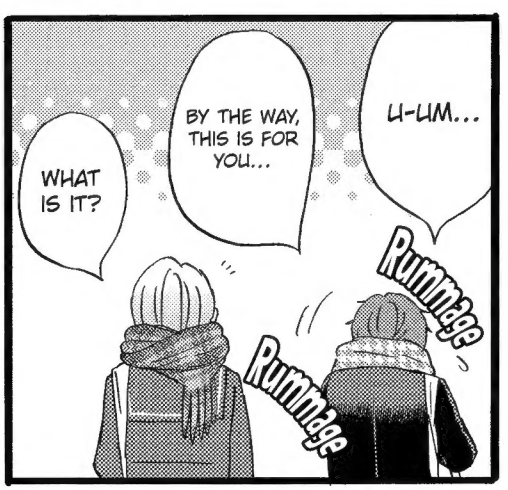

YEAH... THAT'S ALSO THE BUSY IMPRESSION I HAVE OF HOSPITALS AND THE PEOPLE WHO WORK THERE.
BESIDES, IT SEEMS TO BE HARD WORK. MOTHER ALWAYS COMES HOME EXHAUSTED.
For example, today she was dead tired from working the night shift.

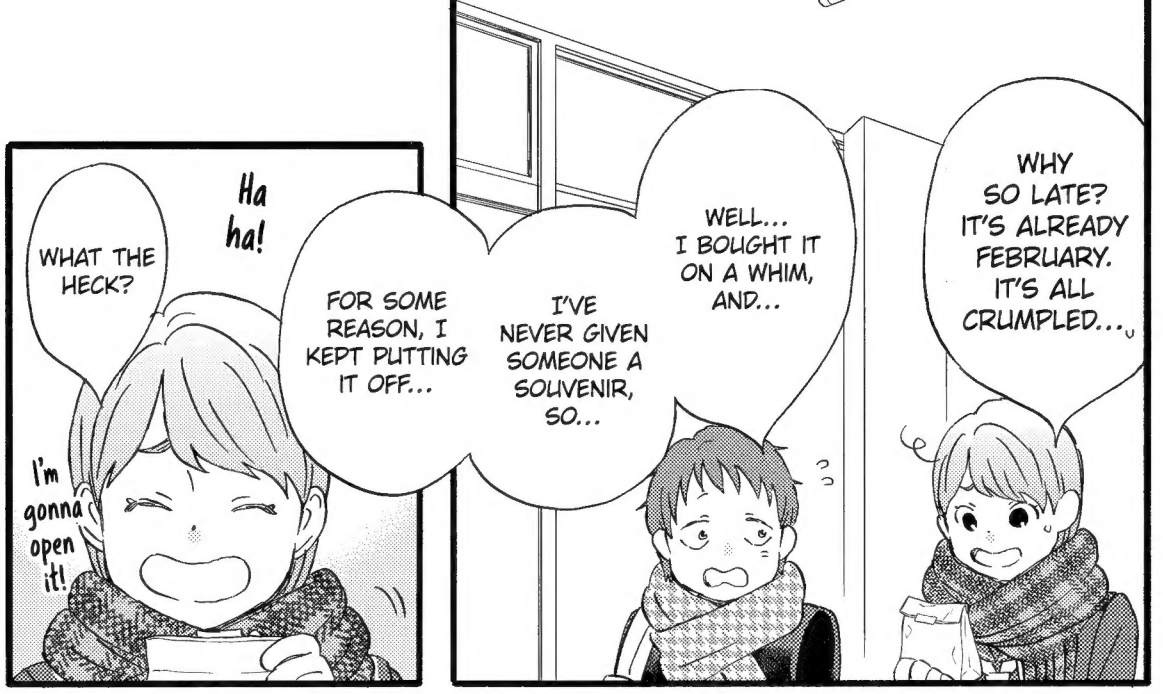

IT'S TOO DIFFICULT FOR AN ORDINARY GUY LIKE ME...
IMPOSSIBLE. YOU NEED TO BE REALLY SMART FOR THAT.

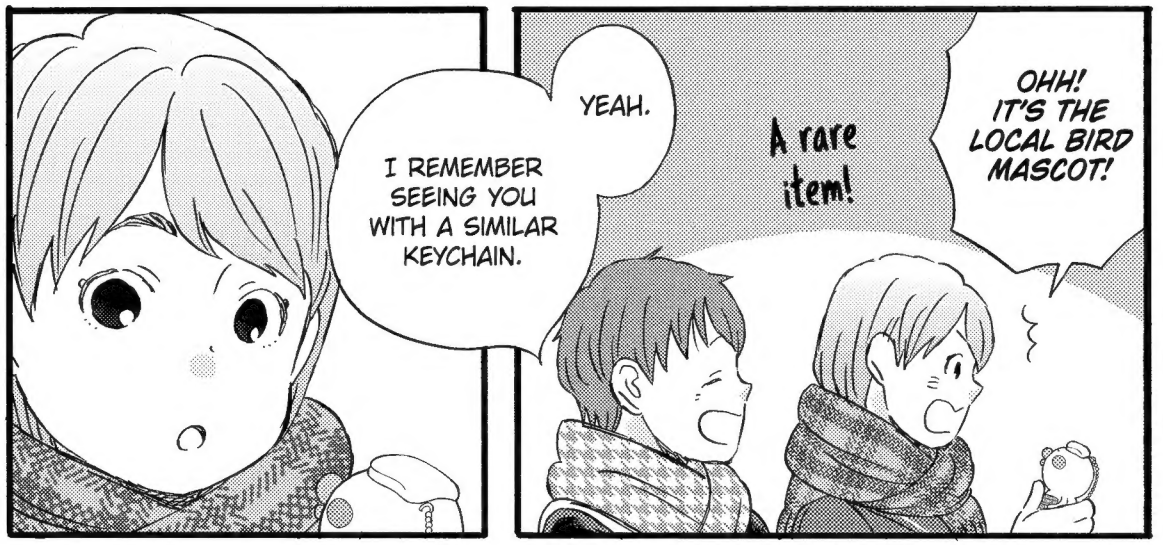
I HOPE YOU FIND SOMETHING THAT SUITS YOU IN THE FUTURE.


BUT THEN AGAIN, I DON'T THINK THERE ARE ANY EASY JOBS OUT THERE, SO...


HUH?!
I WENT TO A HOT SPRING INN WITH MY FAMILY DURING WINTER VACATION, SO... UM, I GOT YOU A SOUVENIR.

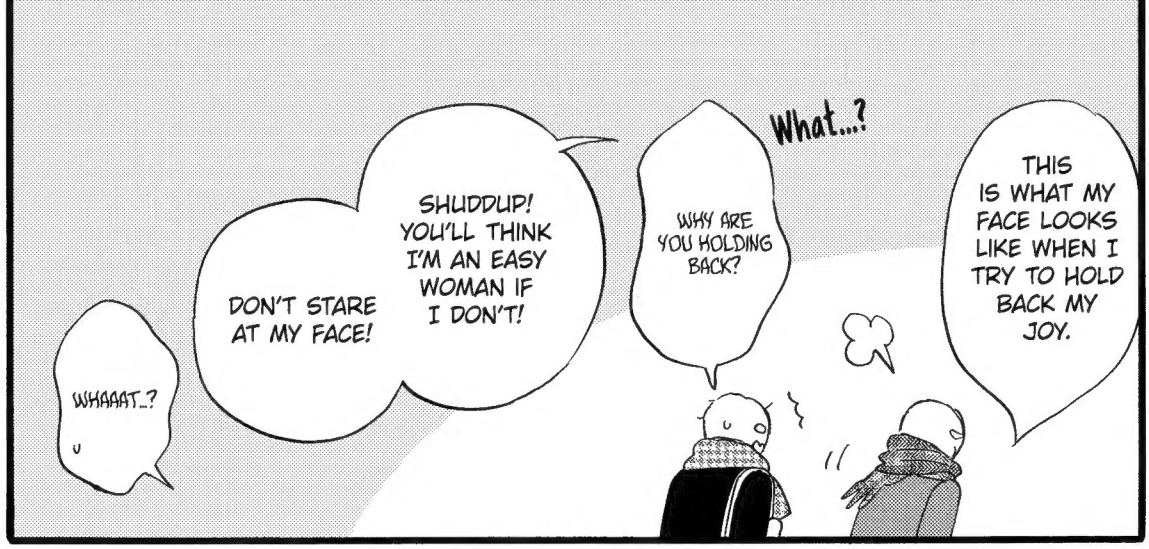

WHAT IS IT?
BY THE WAY, THIS IS FOR YOU...
U-UM...
Rummage
Rummage

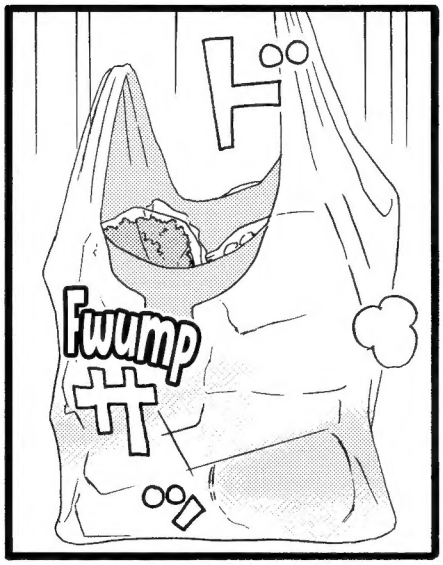

WHY SO LATE? IT'S ALREADY FEBRUARY. IT'S ALL CRUMPLED...
WELL... I BOUGHT IT ON A WHIM, AND...
I'VE NEVER GIVEN SOMEONE A SOUVENIR, SO...
FOR SOME REASON, I KEPT PUTTING IT OFF...
WHAT THE HECK?
Ha ha!
I'm gonna open it!


OHH! IT'S THE LOCAL BIRD MASCOT!
A rare item!
YEAH.
I REMEMBER SEEING YOU WITH A SIMILAR KEYCHAIN.

...
HUH? W-WHAT?
DID I DO SOMETHING WRONG?!

HMPH!


WHAAAT...?
DON'T STARE AT MY FACE!
SHUDDUP! YOU'LL THINK I'M AN EASY WOMAN IF I DON'T!
What...?
WHY ARE YOU HOLDING BACK?
THIS IS WHAT MY FACE LOOKS LIKE WHEN I TRY TO HOLD BACK MY JOY.


Fwump

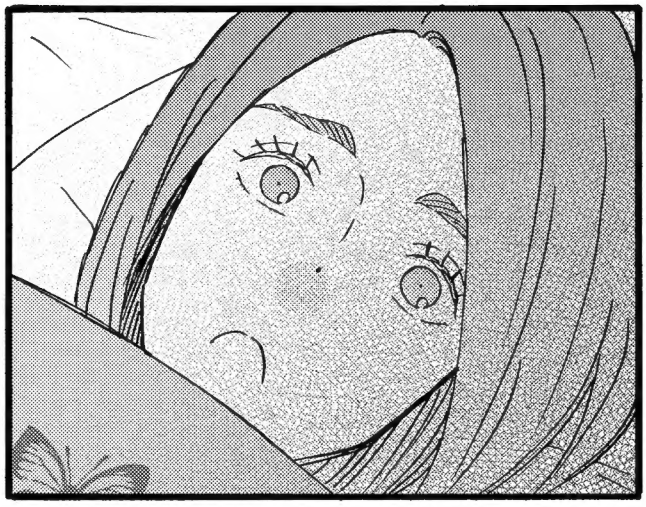
UGHH... IT'S SO COLD!

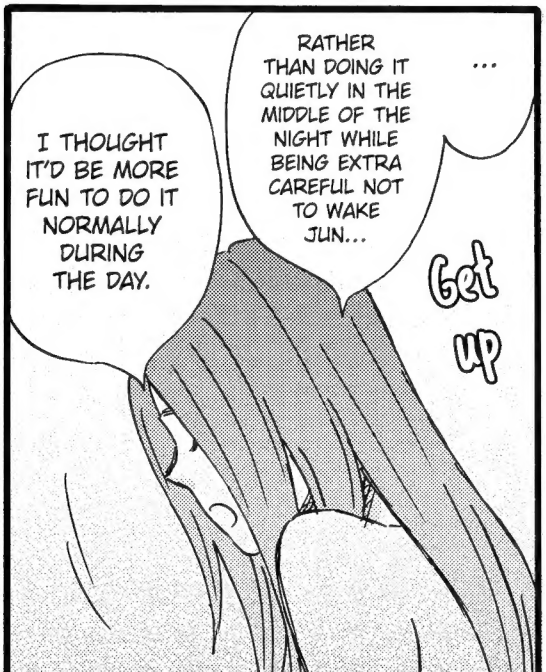
AI-SAN IS STILL SLEEPING SINCE SHE WORKED THE NIGHT SHIFT.
SHOULD I MAKE SOME FOR HER, TOO?

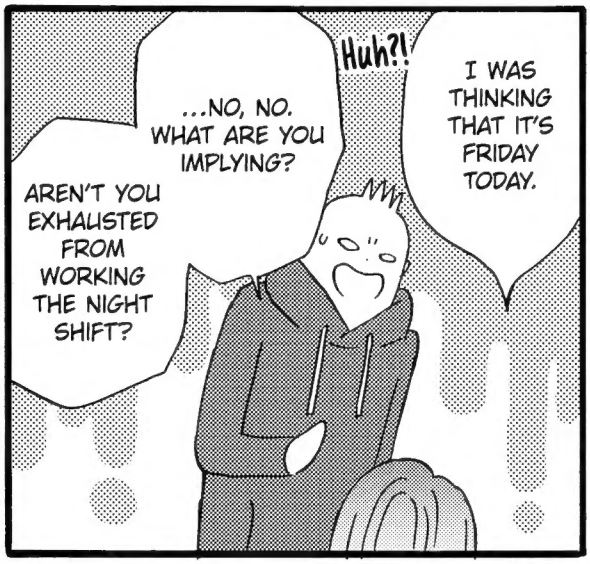
Shiver Shiver
BRRR..!
A HOT DRINK BEFORE DINNER WOULD BE NICE. I'LL PREPARE SOMETHING...

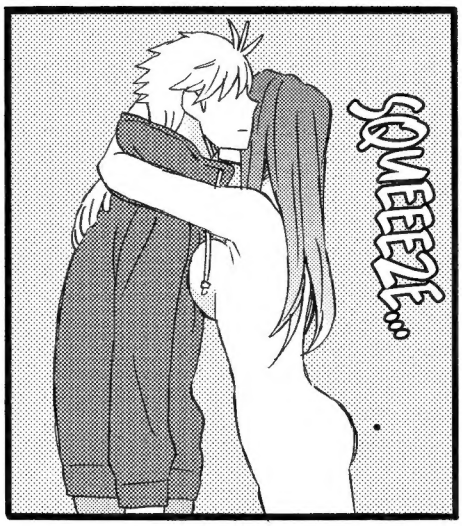
AI-SAN, IT'S ALREADY NOON...
I'M THINKING OF MAKING SOME HOT CHOCOLATE. DO YOU WANT SOME TOO?
MN... HMM...

...
Staare...
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
WELL...

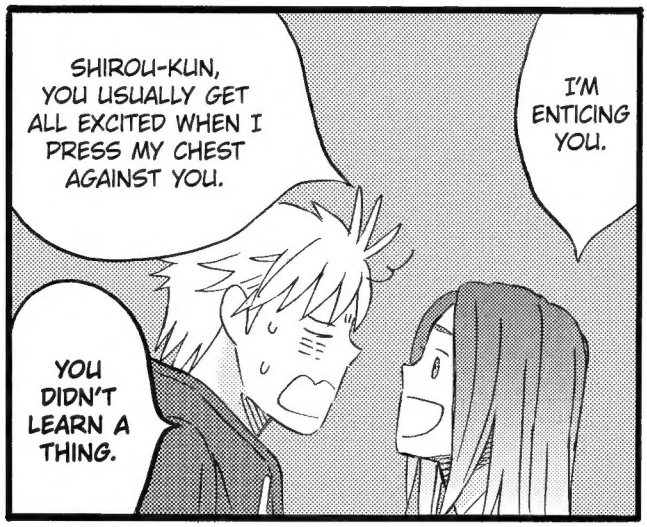



...
RATHER THAN DOING IT QUIETLY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT WHILE BEING EXTRA CAREFUL NOT TO WAKE JUN...
I THOUGHT IT'D BE MORE FUN TO DO IT NORMALLY DURING THE DAY.
Get up

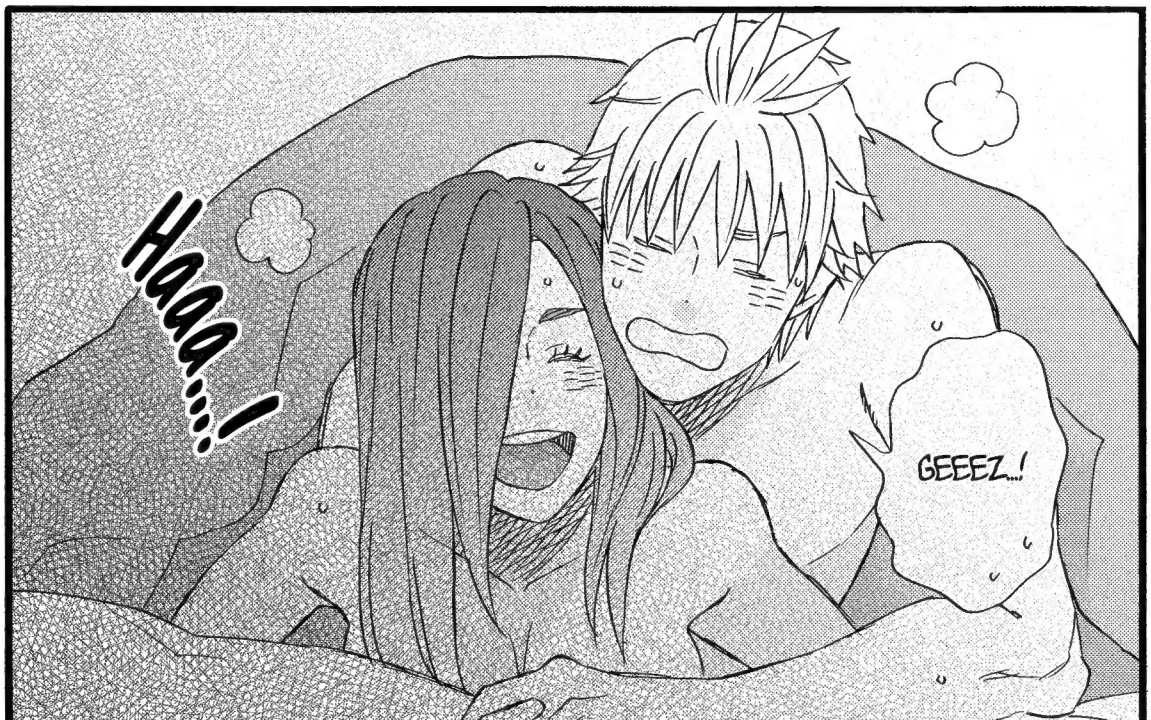

I WAS THINKING THAT IT'S FRIDAY TODAY.
Huh?!
...NO, NO. WHAT ARE YOU IMPLYING?
AREN'T YOU EXHAUSTED FROM WORKING THE NIGHT SHIFT?


SQUEEEZE...

Creak
BUT IF YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE IT, THAT'S FINE.
I'VE BEEN LEARNING A THING OR TWO ABOUT READING THE ROOM. I WON'T FORCE YOU...
OHH... IT'S RARE FOR YOU TO GIVE UP, AI-SAN...


SHIROU-KUN, YOU USUALLY GET ALL EXCITED WHEN I PRESS MY CHEST AGAINST YOU.
I'M ENTICING YOU.
YOU DIDN'T LEARN A THING.

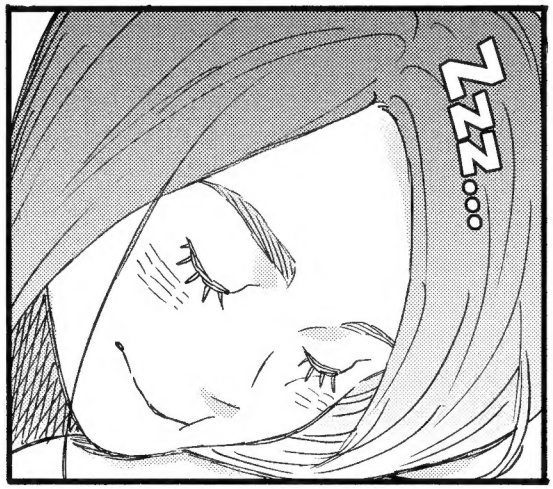
"WHAT AM I DOING"? WELL...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!


Haaa...!
GEEEZ...!

I WAS GOING TO PREPARE DINNER, THEN TAKE A NAP.
YOU SHOULD ALSO TAKE A QUICK NAP, SHIROU-KUN.

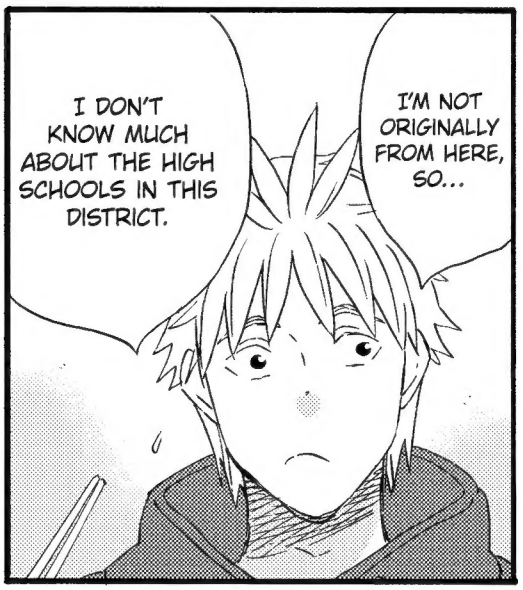
HAA... I FEEL REFRESHED. NOW, BACK TO SLEEP.
PLEASE DON'T TALK LIKE A MAN...

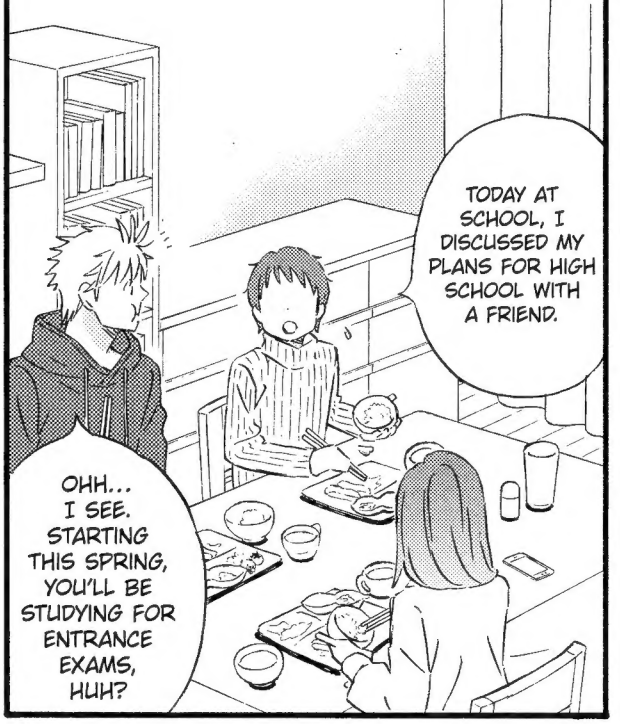
WELL, I SUPPOSE THIS IS FINE ONCE IN A WHILE...


ZZZ...

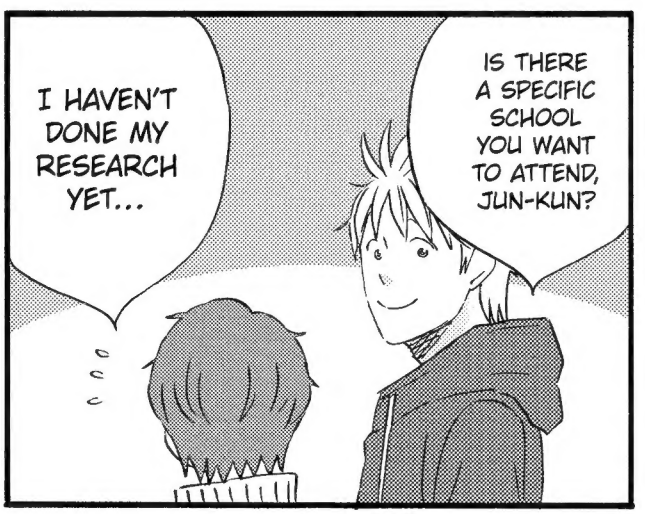
THANKS FOR THE FOOD!

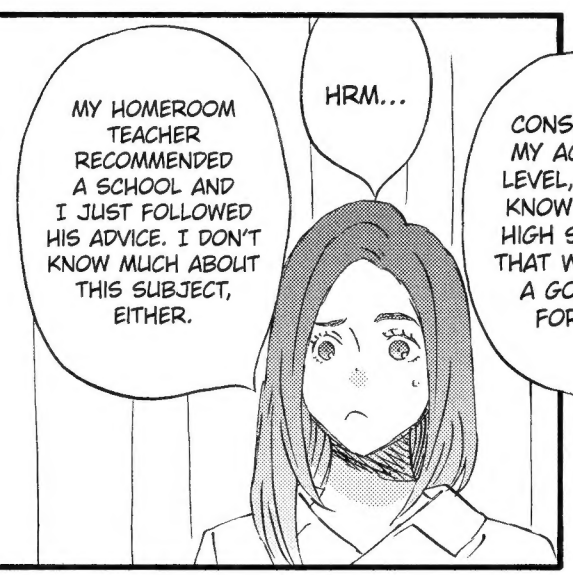
I'M HOOOME...
WELCOME BACK...

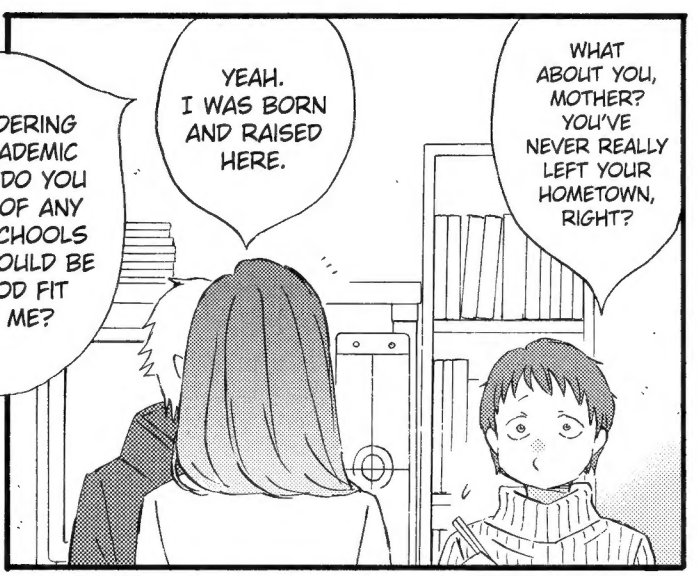

I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE HIGH SCHOOLS IN THIS DISTRICT.
I'M NOT ORIGINALLY FROM HERE, SO...

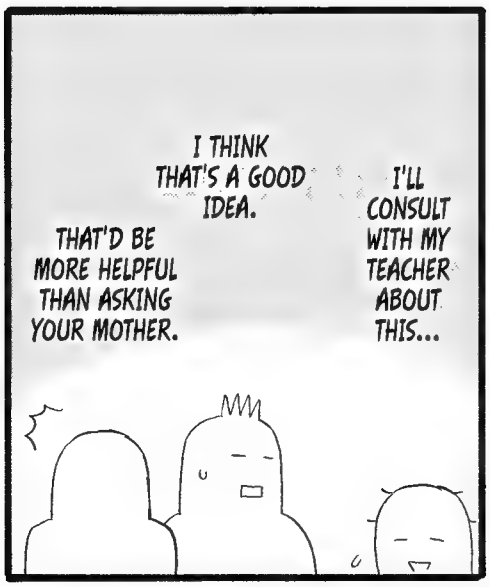

TODAY AT SCHOOL, I DISCUSSED MY PLANS FOR HIGH SCHOOL WITH A FRIEND.
OHH... I SEE. STARTING THIS SPRING, YOU'LL BE STUDYING FOR ENTRANCE EXAMS, HUH?

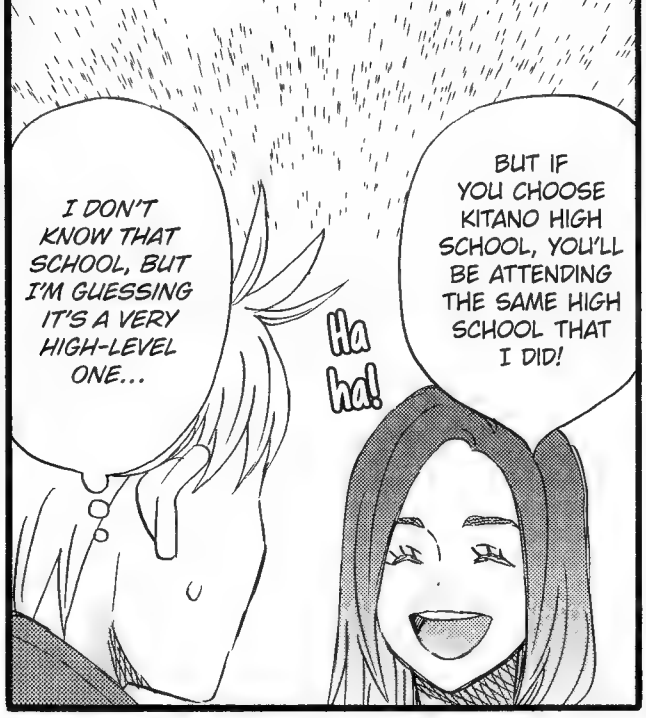
HMM...

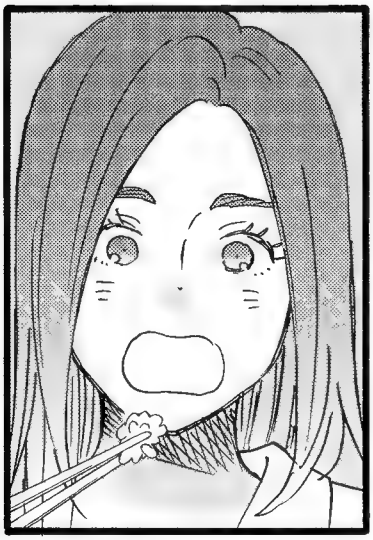

I HAVEN'T DONE MY RESEARCH YET...
IS THERE A SPECIFIC SCHOOL YOU WANT TO ATTEND, JUN-KUN?


MY HOMEROOM TEACHER RECOMMENDED A SCHOOL AND I JUST FOLLOWED HIS ADVICE. I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THIS SUBJECT, EITHER.
HRM...
CONSIDERING MY ACADEMIC LEVEL, DO YOU KNOW OF ANY HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WOULD BE A GOOD FIT FOR ME?


YEAH. I WAS BORN AND RAISED HERE.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, MOTHER? YOU'VE NEVER REALLY LEFT YOUR HOMETOWN, RIGHT?

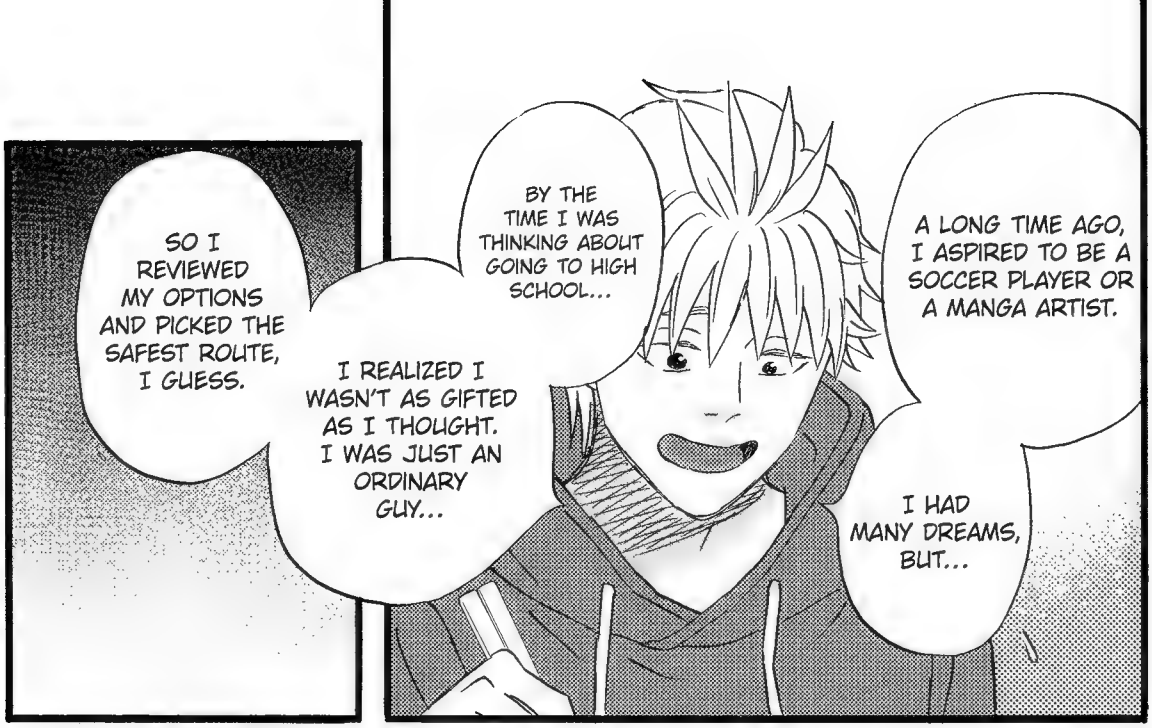

I'LL CONSULT WITH MY TEACHER ABOUT THIS...
I THINK THAT'S A GOOD IDEA.
THAT'D BE MORE HELPFUL THAN ASKING YOUR MOTHER.

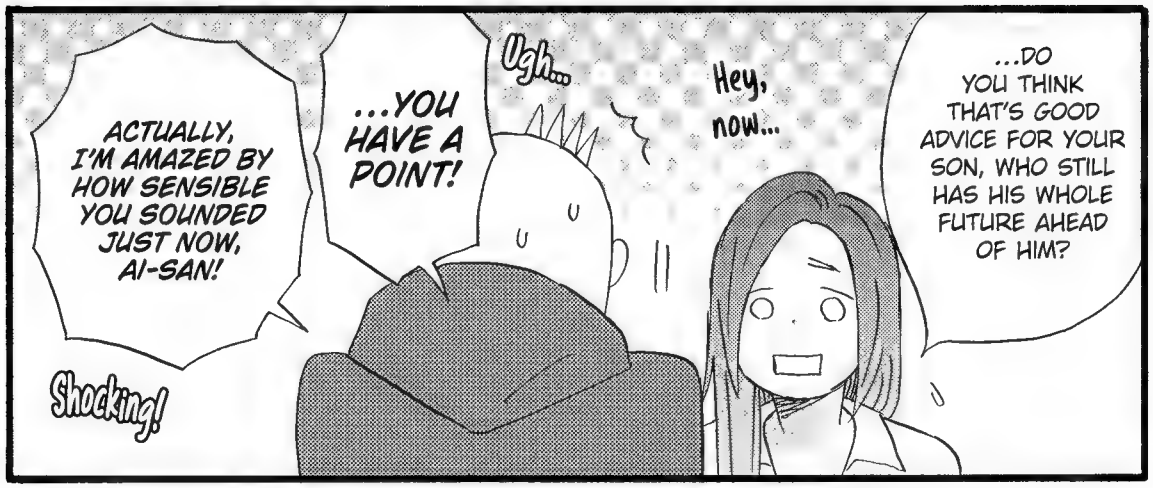

BUT IF YOU CHOOSE KITANO HIGH SCHOOL, YOU'LL BE ATTENDING THE SAME HIGH SCHOOL THAT I DID!
Ha ha!
I DON'T KNOW THAT SCHOOL, BUT I'M GUESSING IT'S A VERY HIGH-LEVEL ONE...

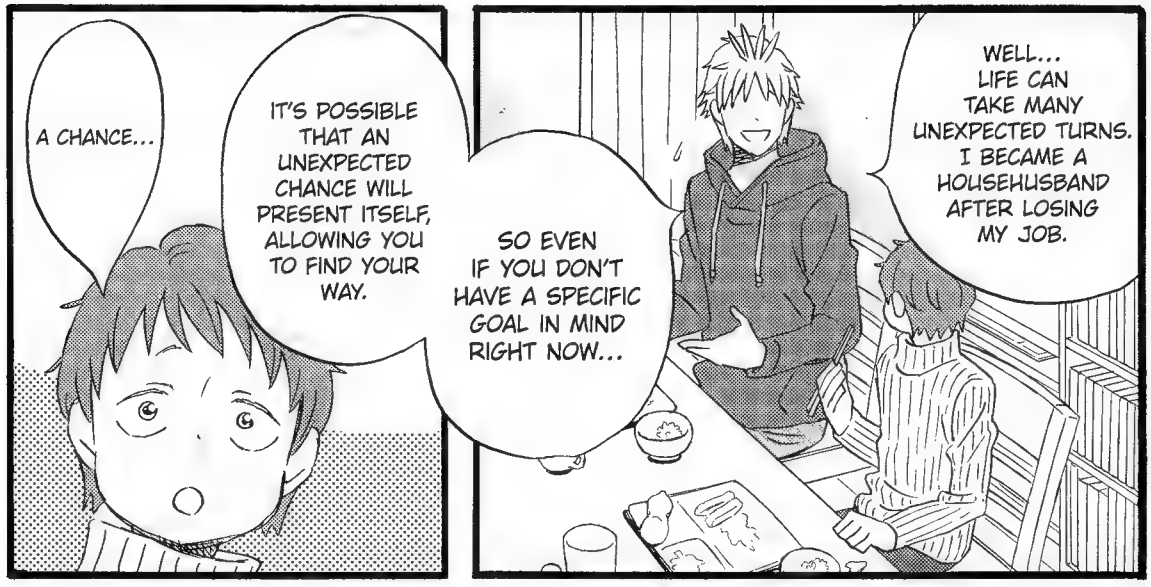


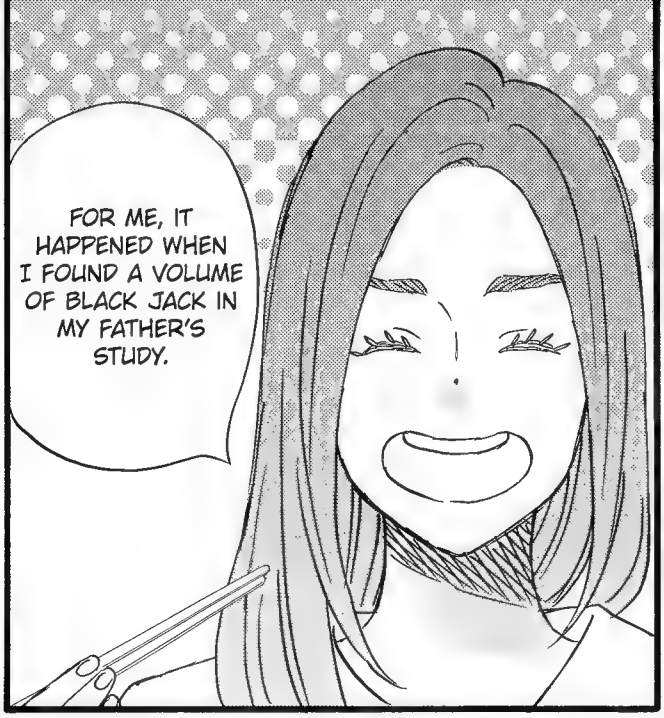
A DREAM, HUH...?

I WAS THINKING IT WOULD BE NICE IF THERE WAS SOMETHING SPECIFIC I WANTED TO DO OR A GOAL I WANTED TO ACHIEVE.
HEY, DID YOU TWO HAVE ANY DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE WHEN YOU WERE MY AGE?

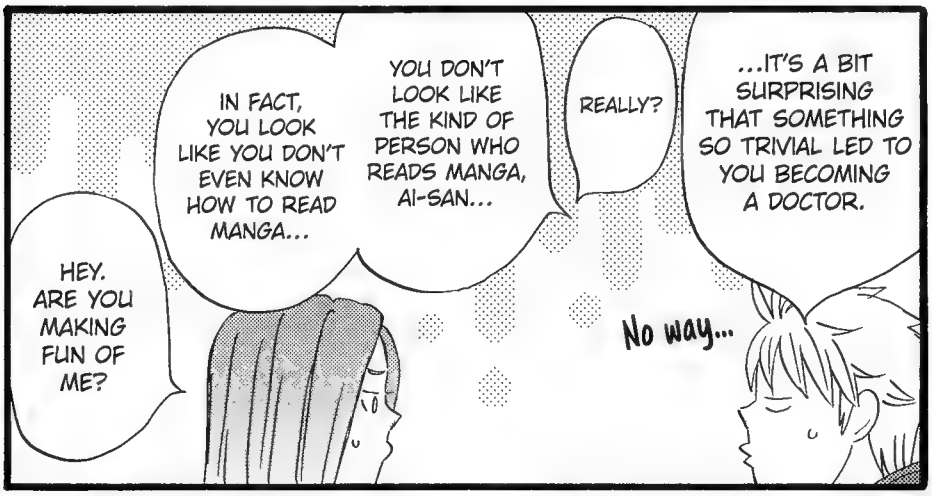

A LONG TIME AGO, I ASPIRED TO BE A SOCCER PLAYER OR A MANGA ARTIST.
I HAD MANY DREAMS, BUT...
BY THE TIME I WAS THINKING ABOUT GOING TO HIGH SCHOOL...
I REALIZED I WASN'T AS GIFTED AS I THOUGHT. I WAS JUST AN ORDINARY GUY...
SO I REVIEWED MY OPTIONS AND PICKED THE SAFEST ROUTE, I GUESS.

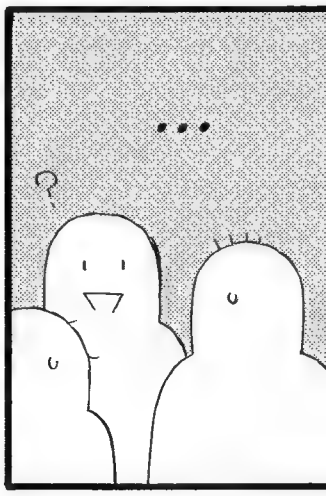

...DO YOU THINK THAT'S GOOD ADVICE FOR YOUR SON, WHO STILL HAS HIS WHOLE FUTURE AHEAD OF HIM?
Hey, now...
Ugh...
...YOU HAVE A POINT!
ACTUALLY, I'M AMAZED BY HOW SENSIBLE YOU SOUNDED JUST NOW, AI-SAN!
Shocking!


WELL... LIFE CAN TAKE MANY UNEXPECTED TURNS. I BECAME A HOUSEHUSBAND AFTER LOSING MY JOB.
SO EVEN IF YOU DON'T HAVE A SPECIFIC GOAL IN MIND RIGHT NOW...
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT AN UNEXPECTED CHANCE WILL PRESENT ITSELF, ALLOWING YOU TO FIND YOUR WAY.
A CHANCE...


FOR ME, IT HAPPENED WHEN I FOUND A VOLUME OF BLACK JACK IN MY FATHER'S STUDY.

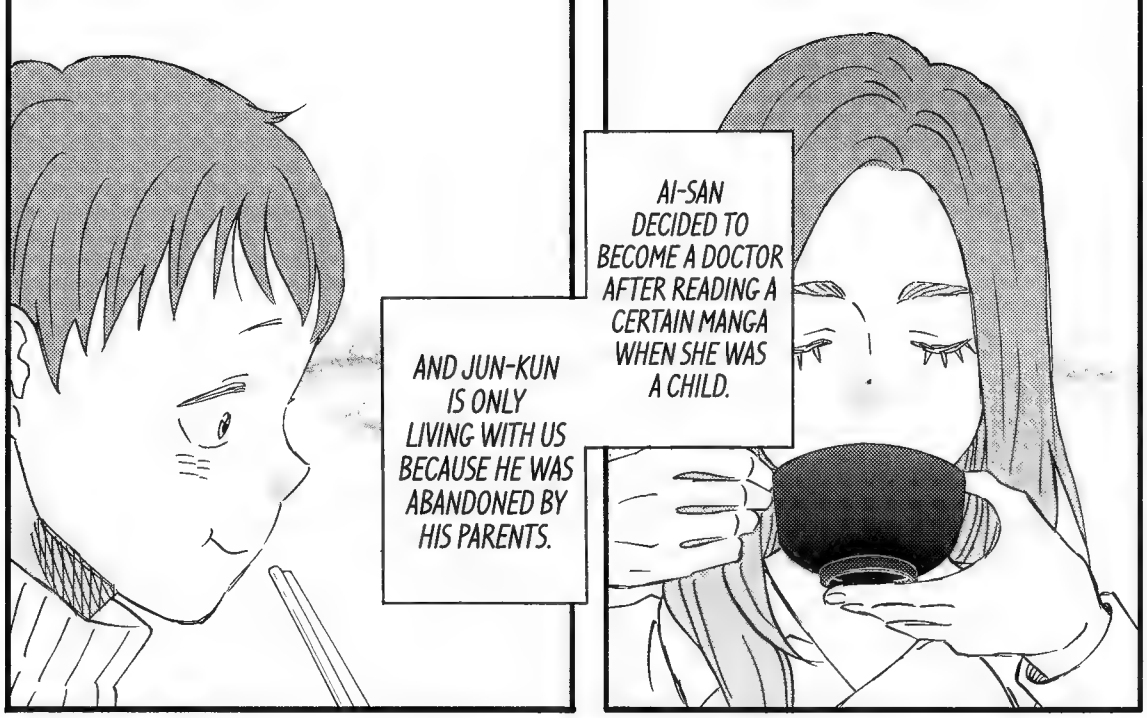
ME? WELL...
WHAT ABOUT YOU, MOTHER? WAS THERE SOMETHING THAT TRIGGERED YOUR WISH TO BECOME A DOCTOR?

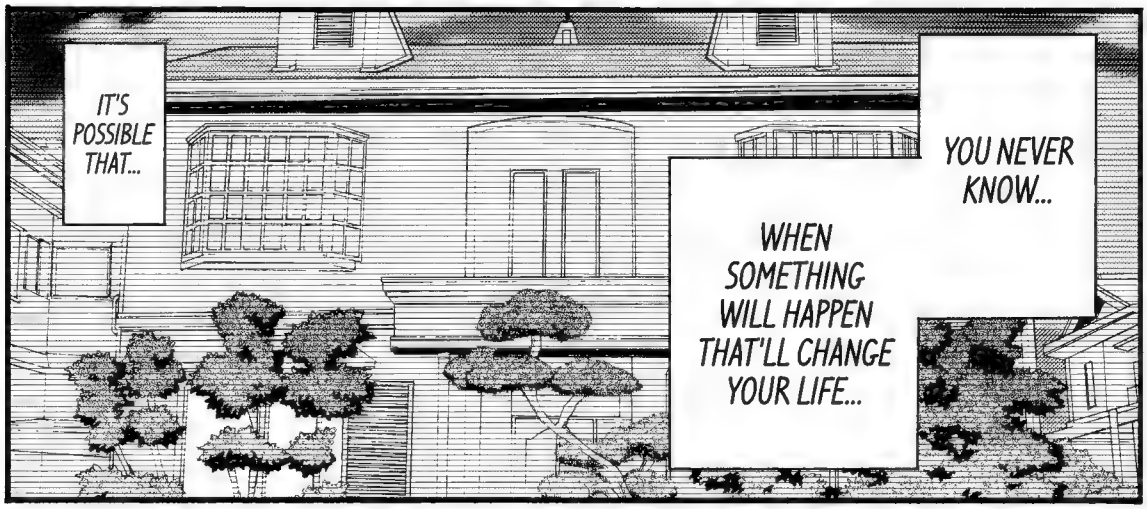

HEY. ARE YOU MAKING FUN OF ME?
IN FACT, YOU LOOK LIKE YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO READ MANGA...
YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE THE KIND OF PERSON WHO READS MANGA, AI-SAN...
REALLY?
...IT'S A BIT SURPRISING THAT SOMETHING SO TRIVIAL LED TO YOU BECOMING A DOCTOR.
No way...

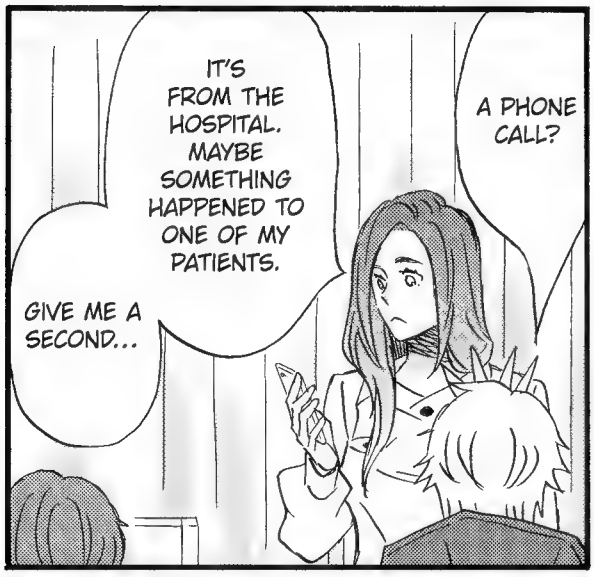

...
?

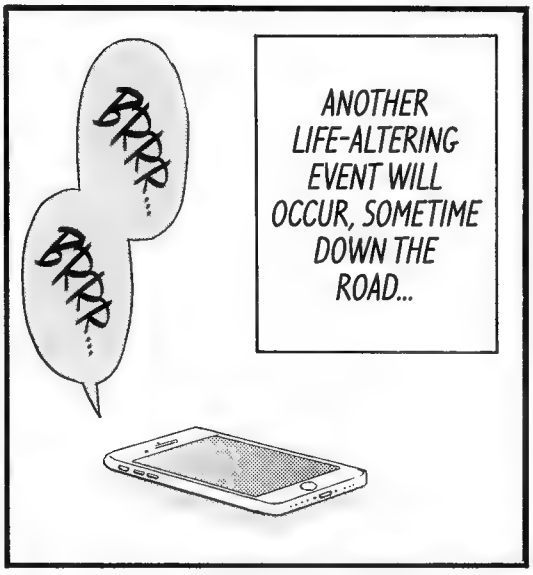
...I BECAME A HOUSEHUSBAND AFTER BEING LAID OFF.

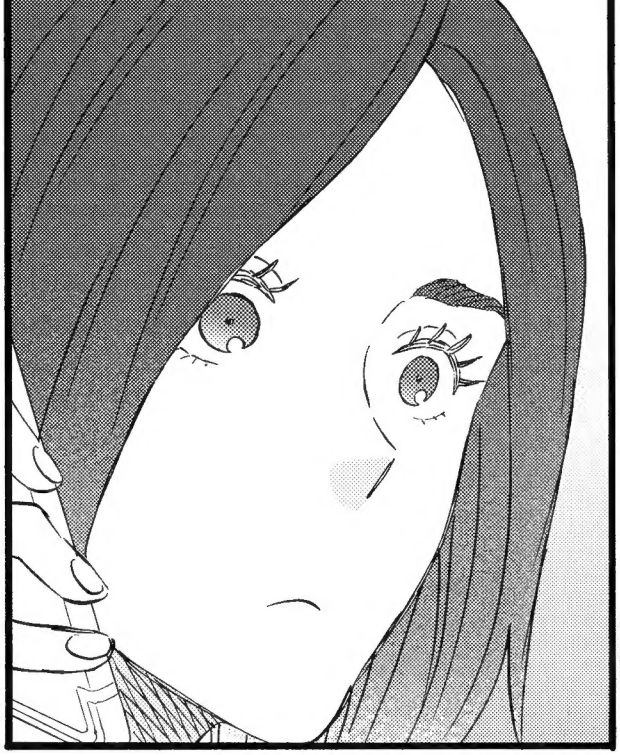
How rude!
Heh heh heh!
Ha ha ha!

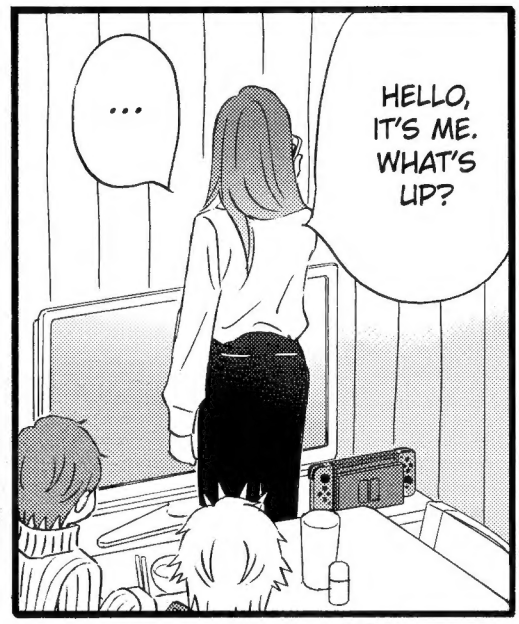

AI-SAN DECIDED TO BECOME A DOCTOR AFTER READING A CERTAIN MANGA WHEN SHE WAS A CHILD.
AND JUN-KUN IS ONLY LIVING WITH US BECAUSE HE WAS ABANDONED BY HIS PARENTS.

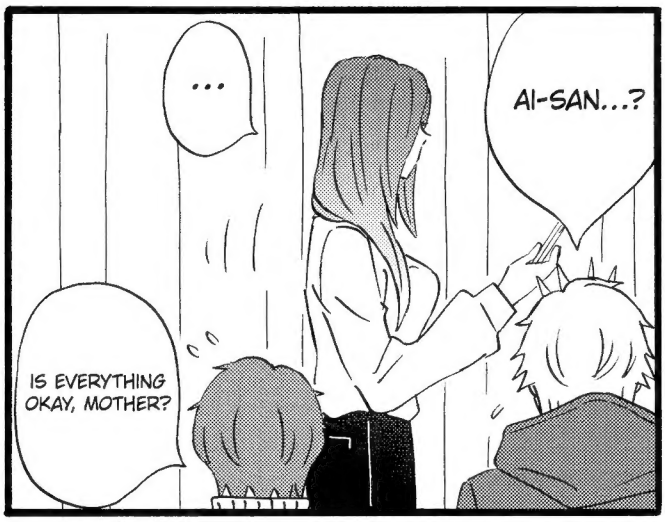

IT'S POSSIBLE THAT...
YOU NEVER KNOW...
WHEN SOMETHING WILL HAPPEN THAT'LL CHANGE YOUR LIFE...

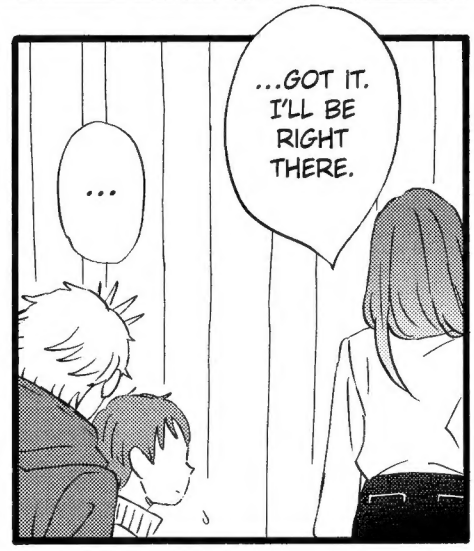

A PHONE CALL?
IT'S FROM THE HOSPITAL. MAYBE SOMETHING HAPPENED TO ONE OF MY PATIENTS.
GIVE ME A SECOND...

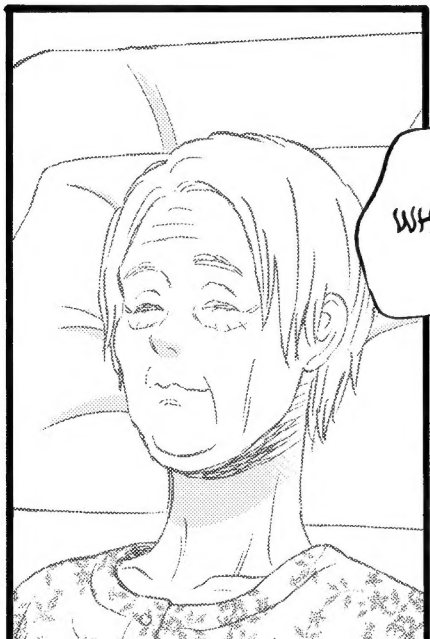

BRRR...
BRRR...
ANOTHER LIFE-ALTERING EVENT WILL OCCUR, SOMETIME DOWN THE ROAD...




...
HELLO, IT'S ME. WHAT'S UP?

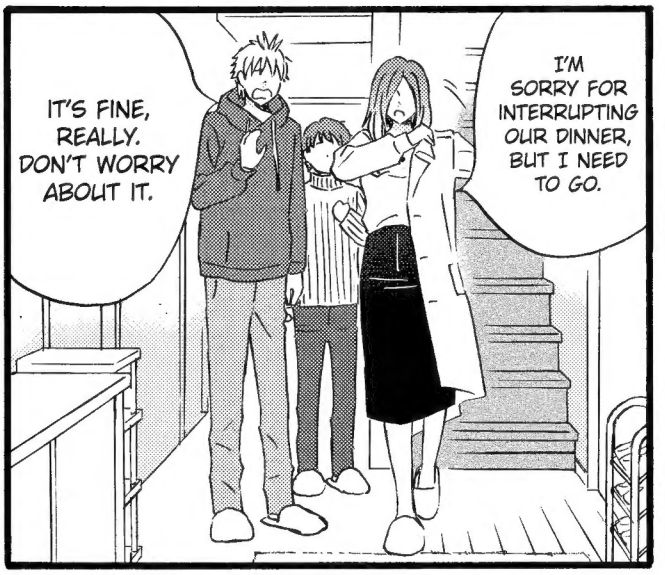

...
AI-SAN...?
IS EVERYTHING OKAY, MOTHER?

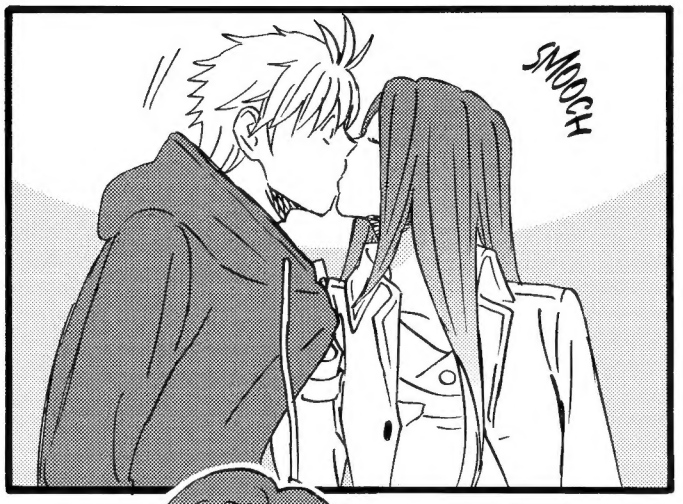

...
...GOT IT. I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.

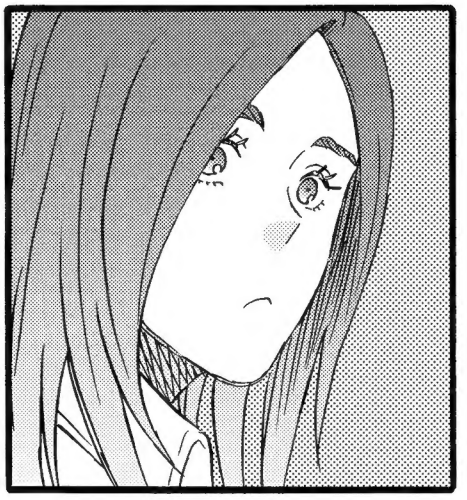


MY MOTHER'S CONDITION BECAME UNSTABLE.
HUH ...?
WHAT?!

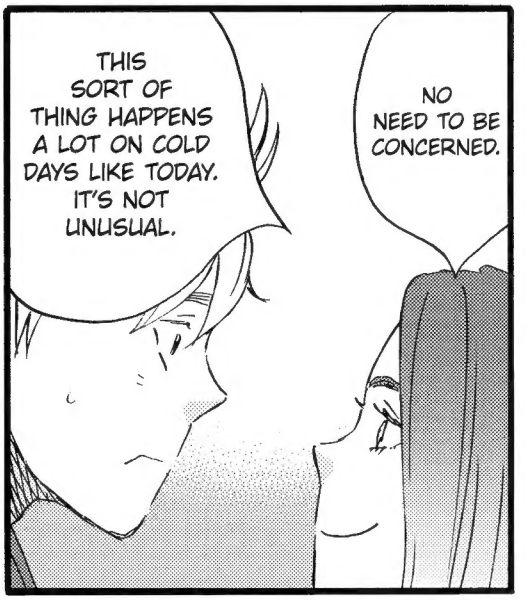
UM... IS IT GOING TO BE OKAY?


I'M SORRY FOR INTERRUPTING OUR DINNER, BUT I NEED TO GO.
IT'S FINE, REALLY. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.


SMOOCH



I'LL BE GOING, THEN.
I'LL CALL YOU WHEN I'M COMING BACK FROM THE HOSPITAL, BUT DON'T WORRY. JUST GO TO SLEEP FIRST.


THIS SORT OF THING HAPPENS A LOT ON COLD DAYS LIKE TODAY. IT'S NOT UNUSUAL.
NO NEED TO BE CONCERNED.

THE NIGHT PASSED AND MORNING CAME, BUT THERE WAS NO PHONE CALL FROM AI-SAN.

SHE DIDN'T RETURN UNTIL IT WAS ALREADY NOON.